



Request for Applications

RFA # 002- PDG-2021



TITLE: Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant Coaching Towards Mastery

FUNDING AGENCY: NC DHHS/Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

ISSUE DATE: May 3, 2021

RECEIPT DEADLINE: Applications, subject to the following conditions, will be accepted until **5:00 pm, May 31, 2021.**

EMAIL an electronic PDF of your application to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education via this email: DCDEE.Contracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov.

The signature of an authorized official is required on the application face sheet. An electronic signature or an electronic scanned copy of the signed application face sheet will be accepted. **Only electronic application submissions via email will be accepted, i.e., do not mail, fax, or deliver copies of the application to DCDEE's physical or mailing address.**

INTENT TO APPLY: Eligible agencies and/or organizations interested in applying for this Request for Applications (RFA) are encouraged to notify DCDEE of their intent to apply via the following link, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2BYJPZL> no later than **5:00 pm May 12, 2021**. Agencies are **not** required to notify of their intent to respond to this RFA; this information is requested to assist DCDEE in planning.

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES concerning this RFA in writing to:

Tilneil Gary, PDG Grant Manager

Email address: DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Questions concerning the specifications, or any information contained within this RFA must be received no later than **5:00 pm May 12, 2021**. All questions must be received in writing, via email to DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov. Responses to all questions received by the deadline will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website <http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/> no later than **5:00 pm on May 14, 2021**.

ELIGIBILITY: This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public and private nonprofit organizations with a current 501(c)(3) standing with knowledge of North's Carolina's early

childhood education mixed delivery system, expertise in developmentally appropriate practices for young children Birth to 5 years and knowledge of adult learning principles.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY:

This RFA will be for a 16-month funding cycle: September 2021 - December 2022. A total of \$1,014,052 will be available to support the 16-month contract cycle. Should a carry forward or no cost extension option be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder, the same option will be available to the contractor. Additional funding for activity continuation may be available for this project depending on fund availability.

This RFA will fund the development and implementation of the provisions of job-embedded Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) to advance the knowledge and skills of the individual early childhood educator.

The Division of Child Development and Early Education will determine actual funding amounts based on the proposed execution of the initiative and the utilization of funds as outlined in the applications submitted for each approved project.

Preschool Development Grant B-5 Renewal Grant Funding Source:

1. Funding Type	Discretionary
2. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)	90TP0056-02-00
3. Federal Award Date (see § 200.39 Federal award date)	12/30/19
4. Total Amount of the Federal Award (awarded to DCDEE)	\$13,414,500
5. Federal award project description, as required to be responsive to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)	PDG B-5 Renewal Grants seek to empower state governments to lead the way in leveraging federal, state and local early care and education investments. Renewal grants will assist states in helping low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. In addition, these grants will help improve the transitions between early care and education settings and elementary school. The overall responsibility of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant is to assist states in the coordination of existing early childhood funding streams, resulting in services being provided to more children birth through five in a mixed delivery system.

6. Name of Federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, and contact information for awarding official	Federal DHHS Office Administration for Children and Families NC DHHS/DCDEE 333 Six Forks Road Raleigh, North Carolina 27609
7. CFDA Number and Name; the pass-through entity must identify the dollar amount made available under each Federal award and the CFDA number at the time of disbursement	CFDA# 93.434 ESSA Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five
8. Identification of whether the award is R&D	No

Federal Requirements on indirect cost rates and calculations according to 2 C.F.R. 200.414:

1. If your agency has or establishes a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (FNIR), then the agency is not allowed to charge the “de minimis” rate of 10% (or some other amount) for indirect costs, as directed by 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
2. Agencies with an FNIR are required to charge their agreed upon rate for their indirect costs and include cost items as determined by the FNIR in their indirect costs.
3. If your agency does not have and never had a FNIR, then your agency is allowed to negotiate a different rate or the “de minimis,” as per 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
4. Negotiation of indirect cost rates in excess of the “de minimis” rate of 10% are performed by the NC DHHS Office of the Controller, Cost Analysis and Administration section:

Cost Analysis/Federal Financial Reporting/Administration
DHHS Office of the Controller
NC Department of Health and Human Services
1050 Umstead Dr
Raleigh, NC 27699-2019
Phone: 919-855-3696

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I. INTRODUCTION

North Carolina has taken significant steps toward building an effective statewide early childhood system, including developing the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan and mixed delivery coordinated system. The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), in partnership with other state entities, has served at the center of this system, providing continuity across early childhood education programs, while focusing on state and local approaches to address community challenges. Going forward, the state is prioritizing a few key areas in the early childhood education system: improving infant and toddler care programs; increasing access to programs through child care subsidies and NC Pre-Kindergarten; providing better supports for early care and early education workers; and promoting family engagement in every aspect of early childhood programs.

The Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG B-5) provides an opportunity for the state of North Carolina to align systems and improve access to high-quality early childhood care and education--one of the goals of the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan. The focus of the *Coaching Towards Mastery* activity is to advance the knowledge and skills of the individual early childhood educator rather than on providing generalized coaching supports geared to classroom or program level outcomes. Aligning with higher education, *Coaching Towards Mastery* will pair the completion of college coursework with access to coaching that will help the early childhood educator transfer knowledge to practice, practice to mastery, and mastery to professional advancement.

Consistent with and aligned to Power to the Profession--a national collaborative effort to define the early childhood profession by establishing a unifying framework for career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards, and compensation--*Coaching Towards Mastery* will provide job-embedded professional development, using the practice-based coaching framework, to early childhood educators for children birth through age five working in child care, with a focus on infant-toddler teachers.

II. BACKGROUND

The Practice-Based Coaching framework is a professional development strategy that uses a cyclical process that supports the teacher's use of effective teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. Practice-Based Coaching occurs in the context of collaborative partnerships. The Practice-Based Coaching framework begins with developing a strong partnership between coach and the teacher and its coaching cycles include shared goals and action planning, focused observation, and reflection and feedback (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2019).

Practice-Based Coaching, professional development, technical assistance and other workforce supports are provided to promote shared best practices and to ensure that early childhood education providers are best able to deliver high-quality programs to children and their families.

While several technical assistance opportunities currently provide supports to early childhood education teachers and administrators through the NC Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) system, NC Department of Public Instruction, the NC Smart Start network and other entities, cross-program coordination still needs strengthening.

The PDG B-5 Need's Assessment noted NC's strengths in efforts to address teacher education through programs such as T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarships. NC has successfully implemented coaching and mentoring support to birth-kindergarten licensed teachers working in NC Pre-Kindergarten and developmental day classrooms. NC has also worked with the early childhood education programs in community colleges and universities to align coursework and credentials and allow for articulation of early childhood education coursework within the higher education system. However, in order to expand access to high-quality early childhood education services, the PDG B-5 Need's Assessment recommends improving the pipeline for early childhood educators to ensure that teacher supply keeps up with demand and further builds a competency-based model that supports training and coursework to ensure knowledge is put into practice in the classroom.

The PDG B-5 Strategic Plan recommends developing early childhood education competencies tied to certificates and degrees within NC's community colleges and universities. The PDG B-5 Need's Assessment also recommends a set of coordinated practices to support children's transition from early childhood education to kindergarten. To improve the early childhood education pipeline, NC is creating an opportunity for the provisions of job-embedded Practice-Based Coaching to advance the knowledge and skills of the individual early childhood educator, including trauma-informed, social-emotional resilience, cultural awareness and engaging families.

In 2017, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) began to lead the Power to the Profession initiative. Power to the Profession is a national collaboration tasked with defining the early childhood profession by establishing a unifying framework for career pathways, knowledge and competencies, qualifications, standards and compensation.¹ The taskforce set four specific conditions and expectations for the revision of the NAEYC professional preparation standards. These included an expectation that the standards would be reviewed in light of the most recent science, research, and evidence. It gave particular consideration to potential missing elements identified in the Transforming the Workforce report, including teaching subject-matter specific content, addressing stress and adversity, fostering socio-emotional development, working with dual language learners, and integrating technology in curricula.² Through the *Coaching Towards Mastery* project, NC seeks to align with the Developing the Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators tool, created by this work, to advance our early childhood education professional development system.

¹ <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/initiatives/profession/overview>

² https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/professional_standards_and_competencies_for_early_childhood_educators.pdf

Coaching Towards Mastery's services will focus directly on advancing the knowledge and skills of the individual early childhood educator rather than on providing generalized coaching supports level toward classroom or program level outcomes.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful applicant will develop and implement provisions for a skills-based coaching program that will advance the knowledge and skills of early child care educators, in the areas of child development and learning; family–teacher partnerships and community connections; child observation, documentation, and assessment; developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate teaching practices; knowledge, application, and integration of academic content in the early childhood curriculum; and professionalism as an early childhood educator.

One award will be granted with the designated funds. The application must consist of a focused approach addressing the following activity areas.

1. Project planning period
2. Activity 1: Coordinate with multiple stakeholders, including North Carolina's higher learning institutions.
3. Activity 2: Develop a plan for embedding professional standards and abilities into NC's professional development system, including a system for measuring mastery of core knowledge and skills.
4. Activity 3: Design and implement a pilot of the system designed to measure the mastery of core knowledge and skills.
5. Activity 4: Create and implement a system to ensure coaches are using effective coaching practices to fidelity.
6. Activity 5: Develop a plan for program sustainability.

A. Project Planning Period

The successful applicant will describe a proposed plan for a planning period (up to nine months) in which the following tasks will be completed:

- Coordinate with multiple stakeholders, including North Carolina's higher learning institutions.
- Develop a plan for embedding professional standards and abilities into NC's professional development system, including a system for measuring mastery of core knowledge and skills.
- Design and implement a pilot of the system designed to measure the mastery of core knowledge and skills.
- Create and implement a system to ensure coaches are using effective coaching practices to fidelity.

- Develop a plan for program sustainability.

B. Activity 1: Coordinate with multiple stakeholders, including North Carolina’s higher learning institutions.

A successful applicant will develop a plan to coordinate with multiple stakeholders, including North Carolina’s higher learning institutions.

- Work with higher learning institutions, specifically NC’s community colleges, to align preparation programs with NAEYC standards and competencies. This work includes collaborating with higher education institutions to create an agreement to award participants that successfully complete the *Coaching Towards Mastery* program early childhood education curriculum credit for prior learning or incentives such as obtainment of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), continuing education credit hours, or as an addition to early childhood education course completion. The purpose of this work is to increase the teacher pipeline by closing the opportunity gap that separates a diverse talent pool and child care programs that would benefit from employing them.
- Collaborate with DCDEE’s Technical Assistance Systems Planning Committee, providing them with updates on the project and seeking their guidance during project planning, evaluation and sustainability. DCDEE has convened a cross-sector group of stakeholders to provide guidance as the Division works to strengthen NC’s professional development infrastructure.
- Work with NC CCR&R and Smart Start agencies (state and local level) to draft a framework for aligning professional development for the early childhood workforce with the standards and competencies.

C. Activity 2: Develop a plan for embedding professional standards and abilities into NC’s professional development system, including a system for measuring mastery of core knowledge and skills.

Effective early childhood educators are critical for realizing the early childhood profession’s vision that each and every young child, birth through age 8, have equitable access to high-quality learning and care environments. As such, there is a core body of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions early childhood educators must demonstrate to effectively promote the development, learning, and well-being of all young children. While developing into an effective early childhood professional one must work on developing the capacity to understand, reflect upon, and integrate professional standards into their daily practices.

NAEYC's Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession³ identifies six Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. The Unifying Framework also lays out three designations with associated scopes of practice for early childhood educators—ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III. Leveling according to NAEYC's Professional Standards and Competencies is meant to be a guide to help the early childhood education ecosystem understand the level of knowledge and skills related to the standards and competencies educators need to master or support in their professional roles.⁴

The successful applicant will develop a plan for embedding professional standards and abilities into NC's professional development system, including a system for measuring mastery of core knowledge and skills.

- Design a professional learning continuum with defined expectations on mastery. The continuum shall reference NAEYC's Professional Standards and Competencies and DCDEE's NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development core skills and be created through a lens of equity.
- Develop recommendations as to how leveling can be used to enhance early childhood education course work in higher learning course content, student assessments at the higher education level, and field experiences of educators in professional preparation programs.
- Coordinate with NC's community college system to align the leveling system with a participant's early childhood education related prior learning experiences such prior learning experiences include:
 - Apprenticeship
 - Certifications and licensure
 - Courses listed in high school to community college articulation agreements
 - Military education and training
 - College exams/proficiency
 - Portfolio assessment
- Develop recommendations on how leveling can be used to strengthen the content and delivery of professional development provided to early educators in NC by various stakeholders

³ <https://powertotheprofession.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Power-to-Profession-Framework-03312020-web.pdf>

⁴ https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/professional_standards_and_competencies_for_early_childhood_educators.pdf

D. Activity 3: Design and implement a pilot of the system designed to measure the mastery of core knowledge and skills.

Aligned with the Practice-Based Coaching framework, the successful applicant will design and implement a pilot of the system created to measure the mastery of core knowledge and skills. The design should be built through an equitable lens, ensuring that diverse participants are chosen, and are at varying levels of their professional development. Preference will be given to applicants that propose plans that utilizes coaches that have already completed NC's Art and Science of Technical Assistance training and a have experience providing technical assistance to the child care community.

Each of the coaches will provide Practice-Based Coaching to early childhood professionals working in licensed child care programs and currently enrolled in ECE coursework at an institution of higher learning. Support of a higher education professor for each student is highly recommended. **[The minimum target is 96 early childhood professionals.]**

E. Activity 4: Create and implement a system to ensure coaches are using effective coaching practices to fidelity.

Like any other innovation, *Coaching Towards Mastery* must be done with fidelity in order to achieve its intended outcomes. Procedures and standards shall be established to ensure that coaching occurs with sufficient frequency and duration, ensure that teachers are engaged with coaching sessions that are engaging and designed to meet their needs, and most importantly be of high quality. There are four key components to the innovation of Practice-Based Coaching: adherence to essential ingredients, quality, responsiveness of participants, and dose of intervention. The successful applicant will develop a plan to utilize the Effective Coaching of Teachers: Fidelity Tool to ensure that Practice-Based Coaching practices are being implemented to fidelity.

F. Activity 5: Develop a plan for program sustainability.

The successful applicant will propose a plan for sustainability of the program after the funding period. Consider the following when developing a response:

- Environmental context: The current state of child care in North Carolina.
- Strategic direction: The plan to build additional support and leadership geared towards supporting the implementation of this intervention.
- Internal capacity: The governance, leadership, and staffing (internal infrastructure) of the applicant's agency.

- Financial plan: Fiscal needs and resources needed to continue the implementation of the intervention.

Desired Project Outcomes

Early Childhood Systems Level Outcomes:

- Increase in the number of early education professionals with college credits available for employment in child care programs.
- Technical assistance practitioners that provide mentoring on the development of professional development plans with child care professionals will have the increased ability to effectively provide guidance on areas of needed improvement.
- Technical assistance practitioners providing coaching to the participating early childhood professionals will provide coaching at a minimum of 80% fidelity of coaching practices.
- Participating higher education professionals will have the increased ability to assess the core knowledge of students enrolled in higher education coursework.
- Participating higher education professionals will have the tools necessary to effectively measure the skills acquired by students participating in practicum courses.

Workforce Level Outcomes:

- Successful completion of the *Coaching Towards Mastery* program will increase participant's education standard points awarded through NC's QRIS system.
- Participating early childhood professionals will increase their knowledge and skills in the areas of child development, building relationships with families and connecting families to the community, child observation and assessment, developmentally and culturally responsive teaching practices, NC early learning standards and professionalism.
- Participating early childhood professionals receiving coaching will master the competency and skills identified as a need on their coaching action plan.
- Early childhood professionals will have increased ability to develop their own professional development plans and determine areas of needed improvement.
- Child care program directors that develop the professional development plans of child care professionals will have the increased ability to effectively evaluate the performance of staff and guide their professional development.

IV. Additional Requirements

1. **Reports-** Provide data as requested by DCDEE to meet federal reporting requirements and as needed for the state's PDG B-5 Needs Assessment, B-5 Strategic Plan, or PDG Program Performance Evaluation. This includes submitting monthly and annual reporting by the deadline from DCDEE in order to meet any submission date required from the federal funder.

2. **Feedback-** Providing regular feedback to DCDEE and stakeholders is required throughout the duration of the grant to contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
3. **Collaboration/Partnerships-** Cross-sector collaboration and partnerships with the NC CCR&R system, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Smart Start network (local and state level), institutions of higher learning, and other entities are required to support cross-program coordination. Explain the contributions each partner or will make toward the activity.

V. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY

Applicants must exhibit comprehensive knowledge of ECE systems, effective policies and practices at all levels of the ECE infrastructure, and program design and evaluation. Applicants must be able to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders, including state and local agencies. Lastly applicants must demonstrate their capacity to manage funds and programs at a statewide level in collaboration with multiple partners through satisfactory audit reports; education, experience, and expertise of key personnel; and demonstrated support for the proposal from the applicant's organization.

Preference will be given to applicants with extensive knowledge of the NC Early Childhood Action Plan, and the Leandro vs. State of NC case.

VI. LINE ITEM BUDGET & NARRATIVE

Applicants must submit a budget, which requires a line-item budget for each year of funding (September 2021 – December 2021 and January 2022 – December 2022) and a narrative for all expenses. A narrative justification must be included for every expense listed in the budget. Each justification should show how the amount on the line item budget was calculated, and it should be clear how the expense relates to the initiative's activities.

Travel Reimbursement Rates

Mileage reimbursement rates must be based on rates determined by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). Because mileage rates fluctuate with the price of fuel, the OSBM will release the "Change in IRS Mileage Rate" memorandum to be found on OSBM's website when there is a change in this rate. The current state mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.56 cents per mile.

For other travel related expenses, please refer to the current rates for travel and lodging reimbursement, presented in the chart below. However, please be advised that reimbursement rates periodically change. DCDEE will only reimburse for rates authorized in OSBM's North Carolina Budget Manual or adopted by means of an OSBM Budget Memo. These documents are located here: <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/library>

Current Rates for Travel and Lodging

Meals	In State	Out of State
Breakfast	\$8.60	\$8.60
Lunch	\$11.30	\$11.30
Dinner	\$19.50	\$22.20
<i>Total Meals Per Diem Per Day</i>	\$39.40	\$42.10
Lodging (<i>Maximum rate per person, excludes taxes and fees</i>)	\$75.10	\$88.70
Total Travel Allowance Per Day	\$ 114.5	\$130.80
Mileage	\$0.56 cents per mile	

VII. APPLICATION CONTENT & FORMAT

The application must be typed, single-side on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins of 1 inch. Line spacing should be single-spaced. Applicants must use Calibri or Times New Roman font **only**, no smaller than an 11-point font. All proposals must include the following (****form attached***).

- 1) **Application Checklist***
- 2) **Application Face Sheet***- Requires original, scanned or electronic signature of authorized authority.
- 3) **Proposal Summary:** Provide a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the activities the applicant proposes to implement.
- 4) **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications:** Provide a 1-3-page introduction to the applicant's organization, including the organization's mission, history, and goals; an organization chart; experience with and capacity to provide high quality professional development and technical assistance for the early child care and education workforce. Include qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this initiative.
- 5) **Initiative Design, Time Line & Strategies:** Provide a 5-7-page narrative describing the proposed initiative design, the rationale for the design, and the activities/tasks that will be accomplished with the available resources. Include as part of scope of services major tasks, deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion, including strategies to plan for sustainability. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task, by position.
- 6) **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors:** Identify any collaborative partners or subcontractors the applicant plans to work with to implement the initiative. Include partner or subcontractor name, address, and nonprofit or for-profit status. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward the initiative, including resources. Attach

copies of support letters for the application and their potential role from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable.

- 7) **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet***: Complete and submit a proposed line item budget according to the format provided with this RFA, within the total budget allotted. Also, complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the “DCDEE Line Item Budget & Narrative Instructions.” The FTE worksheet is required as part of this RFA. Budgets, budget narratives and FTE sheets must be submitted for two time periods: September – December 2021 and January – December 2022.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process that will be used for selecting applications for funding for this initiative.

A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon review of each application the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

- 1) **Proposal Summary (Maximum of 10 points)**: Response must reflect the applicants' understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III.
- 2) **Applicant Organization(s)/Applicant Qualifications/Partners (Maximum of 10 points)**: Response must reflect the applicant's history of and capacity for successful completion of developing and providing technical assistance on data-informed strategic planning, as well as demonstrated expertise of North Carolina's ECE mixed delivery system and ability to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified.
- 3) **Initiative Design, Time Line & Strategies (Maximum of 30 points)**: Response must reflect an innovative design and methodology for a program providing job-embedded Practice Based Coaching that will advance the knowledge and skills of EC educators, including trauma-informed, social-emotional resilience, cultural awareness and engaging families described in Section III. Timeline should be complete, logical, and realistic for the tasks proposed.
- 4) **Alignment with Year 1 PDG work and Power to the Profession: (Maximum of 20 points)**: Plan must reflect how the project will align with NC's PDG B-5 Need's Assessment⁵ and Strategic plan⁶ completed in the initial phase of the planning grant, the NC Early Childhood Action Plan and the early education competencies being developed through NAEYC's Power to the Profession⁷ initiative.

⁵ Copy can be found on the DCDEE website under the “What's New” tab.

⁶ Copy can be found on the DCDEE website under the “What's New” tab.

⁷ <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/initiatives/profession>

- 5) **Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: (Maximum of 15 points):** Recognizing educational outcomes vary disproportionately across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical and developmental ability, and geography, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to design and implement culturally responsive programming. The services provided by this contract (as well evidence of past work) shall include a focus of employing a diversity, equity and inclusion framework in project development and execution – to ensure the program that is developed is representative of and responsive to diverse identities of North Carolina child care workforce.
- 6) **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative and FTE Sheet*: (Maximum of 15 points):** Budget must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must not exceed the total budget of \$1,014,052 allotted for the 16-month contract period and must follow all stipulations included in the budget worksheet and narrative instructions. The applicant must provide two-line item budgets, one for September 2021 – December 2021 and one for January 2022 – December 2022, that when added together do not exceed \$1,014,052. The plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures. If funding will be used for conference presentations, include the proposed conferences and the amount of funding which will be needed for those conferences.

Points can be added or reduced in any section for overall proper grammar usage and organization of the proposal.

Maximum Points: 100

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements of this initiative as described. The selection committee will submit recommendations to the Division of Child Development and Early Education based on the selection process described. The Division will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing **no later than 5:00pm on June 4, 2021.**

IX. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to DCDEE's website (<http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/>) by May 14, 2021.
2. An emailed application must be received from each applicant. If awarded the funding, the original applications must be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.
3. All applications must be received by the funding agency not later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. Electronic applications will be accepted.
4. Upon receipt, the date and time of delivery for application packets from each responding agency and organization will be documented. Budgets and budget narratives are to be

included as part of the application.

5. At their option, the RFA evaluation team may request additional information from any or all applicants for the purpose of clarification or to extend the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluation team is not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and applicant's documented experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agencies or organization's staff and cost. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.
7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.

8. **Application Process Summary Dates**

May 3, 2021: Request for Applications released to eligible applicants.

May 12, 2021: Questions due in writing by 5pm.

May 12, 2021: Interested applications submit Notice of Intent no later than 5 pm. **Optional**

May 14, 2021: Responses to questions released to all applicants by 5pm.

May 31, 2021: Applications due by 5pm.

June 4, 2021: Successful applicants will be notified.

September 1, 2021: Contract begins.

X. **General Information on Submitting Applications**

1. **Award or Rejection**

All qualified applications will be evaluated, and an award or awards made to that agency or those agencies' whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. The successful applicant(s) will be notified by **Friday, June 4, 2021.**

2. **Cost of Application Preparation**

Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.

3. **Elaborate Applications**

Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that

necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired and will not be considered.

4. **Oral Explanations**

The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.

5. **Reference to Other Data**

Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not suffice.

6. **Titles**

Titles and headings in this RFA and any subsequent RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.

7. **Form of Application**

Each application must be submitted on the form provided by the funding agency and will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

8. **Exceptions**

All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and condition by any agency and organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application.

9. **Advertising**

In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agree not to use the results there from or as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of the funding agency.

10. **Right to Submitted Material**

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.

11. **Competitive Offer**

Pursuant to the provision of N.C.G.S. § 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

12. **Agency and Organization's Representative**

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and

telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the application.

13. **Subcontracting**

Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom. Submit with the application any legal agreements which will be required of subcontractors. Potential subcontractors may be proposed in more than one application and the potential subcontractor may submit an application for the RFA.

14. **Proprietary Information**

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

15. **Participation Encouraged**

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

16. **Gifts Ban**

N.C.G.S. § 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.

17. **Contract/Funds Disbursement**

DCDEE will issue a contract to the recipient(s) of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point. To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, the selected applicant must submit a monthly reimbursement request to the Division for all expenses incurred.

18. **Audit**

Please be advised that successful applicants may be required to have an audit in accordance with N.C. G.S. § 143C-6-22 and N.C.G.S. §143C-6-23 as applicable to the agency's status.

There are 3 reporting levels which are determined by the total direct grant receipts from all State agencies in the entity's fiscal year:

Level 1: Less than \$25,000

Level 2: At least \$25,000 but less than \$500,000

Level 3: \$500,000 or more Level 3 grantees are required to submit a "Yellow Book" audit done by a CPA.

Only Level 3 grantees may include audit expenses in the budget. Audit expenses should be prorated based on the ratio of the grant to the total pass-through funds received by the entity

19. Additional Documentation to Include with Application

All applicants are required to include documentation of their tax identification number. Those applicants which are private nonprofit agencies are to include a copy of an IRS determination letter regarding the agency's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. (This letter normally includes the agency's tax identification number, so it would also satisfy that documentation requirement.)

20. Federal Certifications

Agencies or organizations receiving Federal funds would be required to execute Federal Certifications regarding Non-discrimination, Drug-Free Workplace, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Debarment, Lobbying, and Lobbying Activities. A copy of the Federal Certifications is included in this RFA for your reference (see Appendix A). Federal Certifications should NOT be signed or returned with application.

21. System for Award Management Database (SAM)

All grantees receiving federal funds must be actively registered in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) database, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the award (see www.sam.gov). To maintain an active SAM record, the record must be updated no less than annually.

22. Additional Documentation Prior to Contract Execution

Contracts require more documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:

- a. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals as authorized to sign contracts.
- b. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals as authorized to sign expenditure reports and individuals authorized to negotiate the terms of the contract.
- c. Documentation of the agency's DUNS number. Documentation consists of a copy of communication (such as a letter or email correspondence) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) which indicates the agency or organization's legal name,

address, and DUNS number. In lieu of a document from D&B, a copy of the agency or organization's SAM record is acceptable.

- d. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the D&B online registration (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) to receive one free of charge. (DUNS is the acronym for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by D&B.)
- e. Contracts with private nonprofit agencies require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, private nonprofit agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:
- f. A completed, signed, and notarized statement which includes the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- g. A completed, signed, and notarized page certifying that the agency has no overdue tax debts.
- h. All grantees receiving funds through the State of North Carolina are required to execute Contractor Certifications Required by North Carolina Law. Contractor Certifications should NOT be signed or returned with application.

Note: At the start of each calendar year, all agencies with current DCDEE contracts are required to update their contract documentation. These agencies will be contacted a few weeks prior to the due date and will be provided the necessary forms and instructions.

23. Registration with Secretary of State

Private nonprofit applicants must also be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents. (See www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations.)

24. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Reporting Requirement

The Contractor shall complete and submit to the DCDEE, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement form within 10 State Business Days upon request by the Division when awarded \$25,000 or more in federal funds.

25. Salary Limitation

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary

limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

XI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The following items must be included in the application. Please assemble the application in the following order in the format identified in Section VI on page 10:

- ☐ Application Checklist – Item 1
- ☐ Application Face Sheet - Item 2
- ☐ Proposal Summary/Design/Evaluation Plan – Item 3
- ☐ List of Subcontractors – Item 4
- ☐ Line Item Budget & FTE Worksheet – Item 5
- ☐ Indirect Cost Rate Approval Letter (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Commitment or Statements of Support – Item 6
- ☐ IRS Tax Status Documentation – Item 7
 - a. IRS letter documenting your organization’s tax identification number.
 - Or
 - b. IRS determination letter regarding your organization’s 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for private nonprofits.